



SR0147

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to learn of the death of Willard B. Black of Mesa, Arizona, formerly of Danville, Illinois who passed away on March 5, 2009 at his home in Mesa; and

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WHEREAS, Willard B. Black was born on April 6, 1918 in Normantown, Illinois, to Homer and Nina Black; and

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WHEREAS, He had one brother, Earl Black; three sisters, Donna McKinley, Marjorie Trent, and Betty Nield; and a half-brother, Terry Black; and

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WHEREAS, Mr. Black married Laura E. Murray on March 19, 1938 and they raised two sons, State Representative William (Sharon) Black and Robert (Jacki) Black of Danville; she preceded him in death on June 20, 1968; he later married Helen Louise Spinder in Peoria gaining two stepdaughters, Kathy Speedy and Denia (Don) Zuch; together they had seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren; and

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WHEREAS, Mr. Black became affectionately known as "Blackie" by all who knew him; he attended Liberty and Franklin grade schools, and graduated from Danville High School in 1936; he worked at the Fischer, Lincoln and Palace theaters, Illinois

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1 Power Company, and at Automatic Engineering Company, a heating
2 business in Danville, which he owned in later years; and

3 WHEREAS, During World War II he served on the rationing
4 board of Vermilion County and later served in the United States
5 Army; and

6 WHEREAS, "Blackie" was very active in Danville civic and
7 fraternal organizations including: Vermilion County Board of
8 Supervisors, the Vermilion County Conservation District Board
9 Trustees, where he served as Treasurer, and President of the
10 Board during the construction of Lake Mingo, GAO Grotto where
11 he was a lifetime member and served as Chaplain, Olive Branch
12 Lodge, Ansar Shrine and Eastern Illinois Shrine Club, Danville
13 Elks Lodge, Chamber of Commerce State Director and Vice
14 President, and the Danville and Illinois Home Builders
15 Association, where he was a lifetime member; and

16 WHEREAS, He was active in the Boy Scouts of America for
17 over 30 years in Troop, Pack, and Council Levels; he assisted
18 in the renovation of buildings at Portland Arch and was
19 responsible for installing most of the water system serving the
20 campsites and buildings at Cherokee Hills Scout Camp; he also
21 led the project to rebuild the Service building that was
22 destroyed by fire; the Boy Scout Local Council awarded him the
23 Silver Beaver Medal and the Order of the Arrow; and

1 WHEREAS, He worked diligently for Habitat for Humanity
2 while serving on the building committee at First Presbyterian
3 Church; and

4 WHEREAS, As a businessman he sponsored Little League and
5 Pony League baseball teams, and was active in the leadership
6 for youth; he was involved in several associations in the
7 Heating and Air Conditioning Industry and received many awards;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, He retired from Blackie's Automatic Engineering
10 Co. in 1982 as the owner and operator after 45 years; in his
11 later years he enjoyed an active retirement in both Arizona,
12 where he was a "Winter Member" of Central Christian Church of
13 Mesa, and in Danville's Ridgeview Baptist Church during summers
14 in Danville; and

15 WHEREAS, "Blackie" will be remembered by many for his
16 compassion for his fellow man by quietly assisting, supporting,
17 and providing assistance to many individuals who were fortunate
18 enough to cross his life's path; his unparalleled generosity
19 earned him widespread respect among those whose lives were
20 touched by his presence; his son, Bill, best summed up the life
21 his father led by stating "Our father was a remarkable man who
22 loved his family, his children, his grandchildren and

1 great-grandchildren; he will be missed by all who knew him";
2 therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL
4 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with
5 his family and friends, the passing of Willard B. "Blackie"
6 Black; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
8 presented to the family of Willard B. "Blackie" Black as a
9 symbol of our sincere sympathy.